

Women Is Losers

Sitting in the kitchen  
talking with his friends  
about the war, ecology,  
rock and roll, anything  
that matters,

he smokes his way  
through three pipefuls  
of good hash,  
eats the crab curry  
she has brought to the table,  
generally  
has a good time.

His friends  
keep looking at her,  
sometimes in front,  
sometimes behind  
his back. Admiring,  
checking for signs of wear

And after they leave her  
alone with the dishes  
for the living room  
and the stereo

a two thousand-year-old fish  
leaps  
from behind her tongue,  
lies perfectly still  
in the sink, shining,  
says a few choice words  
and disappears down the drain.

10/16/70 Hollywood

For Jane

When she gets no mail  
from him  
for a few days  
she knows he has found  
another woman.

Then a letter comes,  
bursting  
with what he hasn't given away

to anyone. He says  
he feels like someone  
who keeps returning things  
to a store, the clerks  
all looking strangely at him  
because he can't explain  
what it is he wants  
or what he's lost.

He reminds her  
how the leaves turn colors  
and die  
in the city where they  
used to live.  
She puts that letter  
with the others.  
Makes the bed,  
makes herself up  
for whoever is coming.  
She thinks the vacuum he left  
is just fresh air.

10/28/70 Cleveland

-- Joel Deutsch

Allston, MA

### The Window: Nashville, Tennessee

Before the highways were hung overhead  
we drove through the fringes of the slum, on  
our way for a day in the city.

My father pointed to a shack attached  
to a grocery, where black boys stood  
noticing me through inches of conditioned air.  
He says,  
"That's where he died. See the shadow  
on the window."  
There was no shadow there for me,

until several Saturdays later  
my father reminded us to look for it.  
Mother told him that he sure repeated the  
same stories a lot.  
Then I saw it.  
The shadow of an old man  
who'd sat for thirty years next to the window.  
And who died months before he was noticed.